

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

Submitted by: ___Lake Tahoe Area Air Quality Working Group

Finding:

Currently, there is no single source or site that offers comprehensive public information about fuels treatment, prescribed burning, smoke management, and public health for the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Background and Supporting Evidence:

Residential communities in the Lake Tahoe Basin, by virtue of their location in the wildland/urban interface, are especially vulnerable to the effects of catastrophic wildfires. While there are numerous ways to reduce fuels, prescribed fire is an important tool used to maintain healthy ecosystems. If not carefully managed, smoke can be a nuisance and create unintended impacts to residents and businesses thereby adversely impacting the community's health.

Smoke from prescribed fire is produced in lesser quantities than from a wildfire. It can contribute to levels of pollution that exceed protective health based air quality standards, i.e. the creation of fine particles and gases.

Many federal, state, and local agencies have created limited publications and websites that provide the public with information on fuels treatment, prescribed burning, smoke management, and their effects on public health. There is no centralized location where information can be easily accessed to educate, inform, and involve residents and visitors in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Recommendation(s):

A sub-committee of the Lake Tahoe Area Air Quality Working Group should develop suitable public information products (accounting for different values, expectations, and level of local knowledge between visitors and residents) to be used by all land managers and air quality agencies in the Basin to educate the public on fuels treatment, prescribed burning, smoke management, and public health.

Impacts of Implementation:

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is REQUIRED (Best Estimate):

- ☐ Cost: Staff from air and land management agencies can put together the information necessary for public information products. There may be some future costs associated with advertisement and dispersal of the information to residents and visitors.
- ☐ Funding source: Solicit from benefiting agencies.
- ☐ Staffing: No additional staff, however additional time from existing staff work programs would be needed.
- ☐ Existing regulations and/or laws: N/A

Analysis of impacts on the following factors is OPTIONAL:

- ☐ Operational
- ☐ Social - With improved understanding of the need for and benefits of prescribed fire and better information about prescribed fire activities, it is expected that social open-mindedness of and support for prescribed burning will increase. Those visiting the Tahoe Basin will have one location to find valuable information that many affect their visit.
- ☐ Political
- ☐ Policy
- ☐ Health and Safety
- ☐ Environmental
- ☐ Interagency

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PROPOSED